

JOB

I'm lying on the couch watching TV. I'm getting drowsy. I should brush and floss, but I'd rather just hit the OFF button on the channel-changer and go to sleep. I should go upstairs to the bathroom to brush and floss.

Then, suddenly, I'm hit with one of those flashes of vision and clarity that come along only a few times during a lifetime; a moment that can forever change the course of a life. Conveniently, my moment comes during a commercial.

In that moment, I see a vision of Joe Frazier, the former boxer. I see Joe weaving forward in the 120⁰ heat, humidity, and hot TV lights of Manila, fighting his way through Ali's jabs and crosses — just to land one hook to the body. Ali grabs Joe, holds him. Ali is five inches taller than Joe and has much longer arms. But Joe keeps coming. Joe is undaunted. Ali hits him with three of his best, and Joe always answers with one of his. Ali goes back to his corner after the 12th round and says to his trainer, "He's CRAZY!" By the end of the 14th round, both of Joe's eyes are swollen shut. Ali is unloading on him. Joe staggers in two-legged wounded-bull hops; but he won't go down. Joe's trainer won't let him come out for the 15th — he literally can't see.

Ali wins, but pisses blood for the next two weeks.

Joe never forgives his trainer for not letting him come out for that last round — still hasn't spoken to him to this day.

"What were you thinking, Joe?" announcer asks on 15-year anniversary of the fight.

"I wasn't thinking anything, I had a job to do and just wanted to get the job done."

"But Joe, the heat"

"I was there to do a job. That's all I was thinking about."

I'm startled from my sleep by a loud TV noise. I jump off the couch. I jab the OFF button. I bob-and-weave up the stairs toward the bathroom.